

## **Historic, Archive Document**

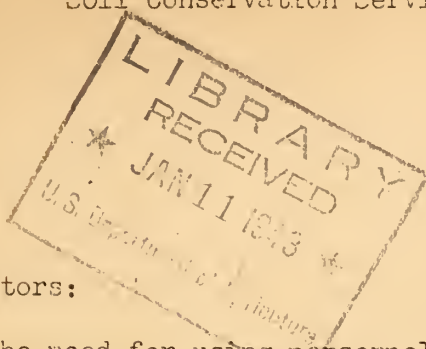
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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Soil Conservation Service



FIELD MEMORANDUM SCS-1079

Re: Conservation Aids

October 17, 1942

To All Regional Conservators:

The extreme urgency of the need for using personnel at maximum efficiency has been self-evident for some time. It is clear that we must expect to lose still more men to the armed forces. The recruitment of new people is more difficult, and in view of present trends, is likely to become more so. Yet, we must now render more service than ever to farmers if our wartime responsibilities are to be fully discharged.

In the field work of the Service a condition has arisen that is cause for additional concern. The rate at which farms are being planned has dropped slightly, and at the same application of conservation practices is not proceeding at a rate rapid enough to assure complete application by the time the agreements terminate. This is a general condition, and while there are certain conservation districts where this is not true, there are many more where the rate of planning has far outstripped the rate of application. Obviously, until plans are applied to land, farmers cannot increase their production as a result of conservation farming.

There are many reasons for this condition. Our farm planners have worked hard to raise the rate of planning. As plans pile up, they must turn back to help farmers apply plans already made, and in so doing, the planning rate must necessarily drop off. To regain the former planning rate, farm planners have no recourse but to neglect assistance to farmers in plan application. This vicious circle emphasizes clearly that we have two distinct phases in our conservation work, namely, (1) planning, and (2) application and maintenance. We still have a goodly supply of soil conservationists in grade P-1 and P-2 who, if they are not bound by the necessity of taking valuable planning time for application work, can increase substantially our present rate of planning. Working with farmers and ranchers in preparing conservation plans calls for greater skill, training, and experience than do application and maintenance, which is the reason why we have always required professionally trained men to do the planning job. We cannot afford to have these men devote their abilities to jobs that do not require the full exercise of their professional training. This is simple economy in the use of manpower.

From these considerations it is obvious that we must provide our planning technicians with assistance. This assistance should be used so as to relieve planners of the necessity for performing any great amount of application or maintenance work. For this purpose we need to give very serious and immediate attention to possibilities of employing aids of subprofessional grade either full time, or part time, or on a seasonal basis.

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Among the many ways in which these conservation aids can assist planners are the following:

1. Running contour lines for contour cultivation, strip cropping, terraces, and other practices requiring contouring of the land.
2. In seasonal application of practices, such as: seeding, liming, tilling, special grass or kudzu planting, and the like.
3. In marking trees for cutting and for woodland thinning, tree planting, and the like.
4. On open range and similar pastures -- checking livestock numbers and determining whether or not existing and prospective forage supplies are adequate to carry the numbers found; noting condition of fences, watering places, and other range facilities or structures; noting distribution of livestock; otherwise consulting with ranchers respecting current progress of management plans including best utilization of available forage and feed reserves.
5. Similar related duties aimed principally at helping farmers in the application of plans.

There is one reservoir of manpower as yet scarcely touched by the Service. This is the group of farmers and ranchers who have applied conservation practices and measures on the lands they use. We are aware that farmers in many localities are themselves confronted with a labor shortage, and at first sight it may appear unwise or impossible to attempt employing them in the Service. Farming, however, is seasonal, and in nearly every locality there are a few farmers or ranchers with sufficient qualifications who not only have time to devote to conservation work, but who would be particularly effective in helping neighbors to apply and use conservation practices. In addition, there are types of persons in a great many other walks of life with background and experience which should enable them to serve as effective conservation aids.

Authority to employ part time or seasonal aids have already been delegated to each region. Briefly, there are four possible ways of doing this without delay:

1. For intermittent, w.a.e. employment, where not more than 20 days' service per month are required and where the total salary per service year will not exceed \$540, local eligibles may be employed under letter of authorization without time limitation. (See Personnel Circular 42, Revision 1, Schedule A-1-6.)
2. For full time service in periods not in excess of 60 calendar days, use the regular 60-day letter of authorization procedure provided in Personnel Circular 42, Revision 1.

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3. For intermittent service on a seasonal basis, use the special 120-day authority by letter of authorization provided in Field Memorandum SCS-7477-E. This special authorization expires December 31, but we anticipate securing approval from the Department and the Civil Service Commission for another year.
4. For indefinite, full time service, there should be no difficulty in arranging with Civil Service Regional Directors for approval of War Service appointments for local qualified applicants since there is little likelihood that the Commission will have available a register of eligibles with the qualifications required.

We want you to use every practicable opportunity to increase the number of your conservation aids -- seasonal and full time -- in order to make the maximum effective utilization of available manpower during this period. This problem should be thoroughly discussed with the Regional Chief of Operations, the Chiefs of Personnel Management and Budget and Finance Divisions, and State and district conservationists. Let us hear from you concerning your plans in this respect at your earliest opportunity.

*H. E. Jones*  
Acting Chief

